

ORATION

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

LEGISLATURE OF NEW JERSEY,

UPON

“OUR SLEEPING HEROES,”

February 22d, 1866.

BY JOHN DAVIDSON, ESQ.,

OF ELIZABETH, N. J.

TRENTON, N. J.

PRINTED AT THE “STATE GAZETTE” OFFICE.
1866.

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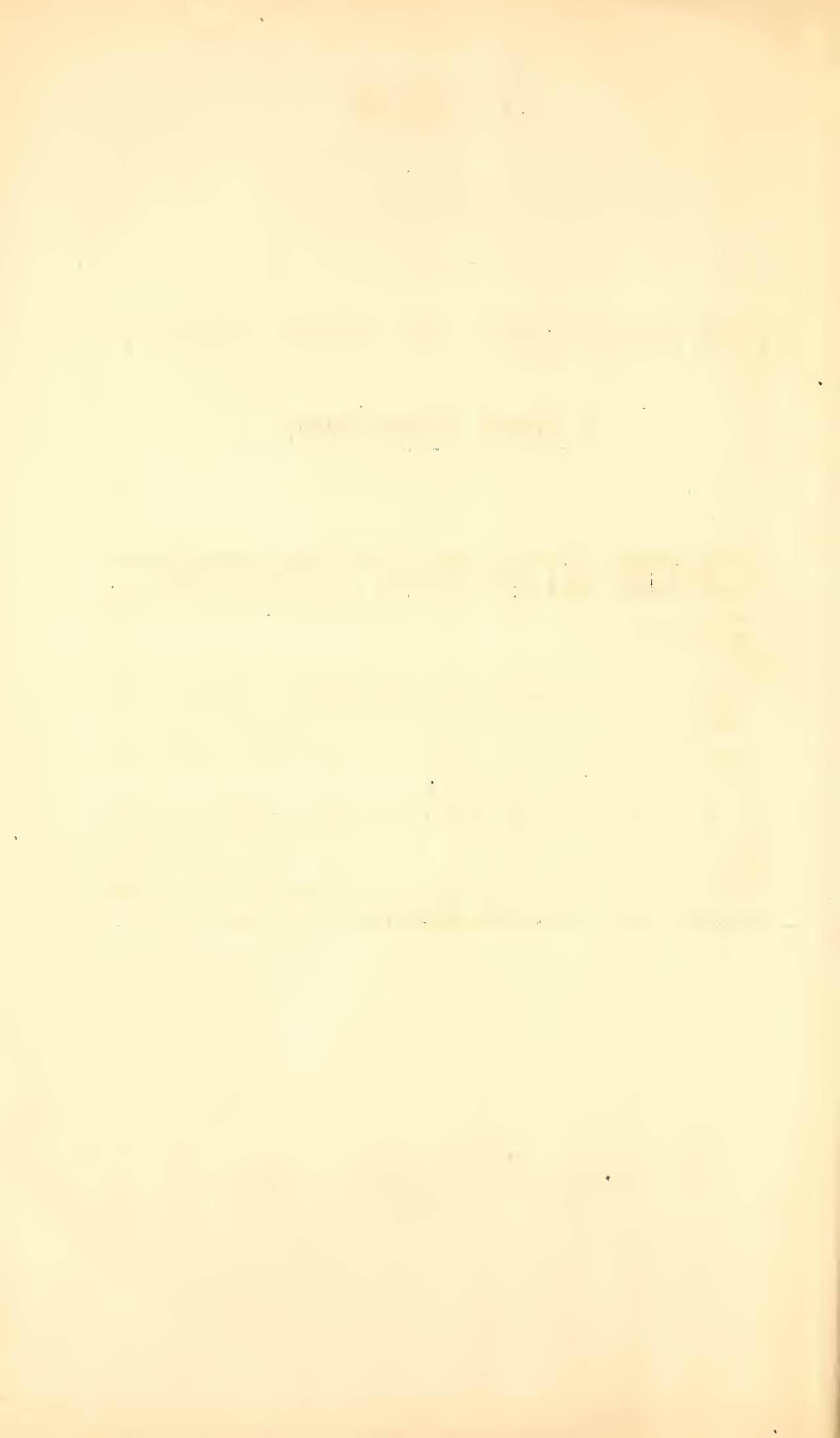
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A JOINT RESOLUTION.

A joint resolution, offered by Hon. De Witt Clinton Morris, Member from Hudson County, and unanimously concurred in by the Senate and Assembly in commemoration of the Birth-Day of the immortal Washington:

WHEREAS, a most eloquent tribute to our lamented dead has been prepared by John Davidson, Esq., of Elizabeth, in an oration upon "Our Sleeping Heroes;" and whereas, the same is the only carefully prepared address or oration upon this subject by any citizen of New Jersey; therefore,

1. *Be it resolved by this Assembly* (the Senate concurring), That John Davidson, Esq., be invited to deliver the same before this Legislature, in the Assembly Chamber, at 8 o'clock P. M., upon the 22d of February, the Birth-Day of our greatest of Dead, as a fitting mark of respect to the memory of all those who fell in the late war."

STATE OF NEW JERSEY,
ASSEMBLY CHAMBER, February 20th, 1866.

JOHN DAVIDSON, Esq.:

DEAR SIR: Herewith you have a copy of concurrent resolution which I had the honor to offer, and which was unanimously adopted by the Senate and Assembly of our State, inviting you to repeat, as an appropriate occasion, your oration delivered in Elizabeth, on "Our Sleeping Heroes," in the Assembly Chamber, at Trenton, on the 22d inst., at 8 o'clock P. M., before our legislative members. Inasmuch as we have both been called upon to surrender up brothers, who were conspicuous actors for their country's cause, and whose names are enrolled with that heroic band; I naturally feel great interest in the subject of your talented oration, and in behalf of the members of the Senate and Assembly, ask your acceptance of their invitation, and a favorable reply.

Very respectfully yours, &c.,
DE WITT CLINTON MORRIS,
Member of Assembly from Hudson Co.

ELIZABETH, February 21st, 1866.

DEAR SIR:—Your letter of the 20th—informing me of the concurrent resolution adopted by the Senate and House, inviting me to deliver my address upon Our Sleeping Heroes, in the Assembly Chamber, at 8 o'clock P. M., upon the 22d day of February, and enclosing a copy of the preamble and resolution—is received.

In replying to the same, I would do myself injustice, did I not express my pleasure at this mark of respect and honor which the Legislature has conferred upon me, in extending to me the invitation above mentioned, and in the very flattering terms in which the preamble and resolution are couched.

I can fully appreciate the loss you feel in the death of your brother, the gallant, loved and lamented Colonel O. H. Morris, of the 66th

N. Y. Volunteers, and yet, while we mourn the loss of brothers, how sweet the recollection is, that both fell in the noblest cause in which ever a sword was drawn in battle's stern array.

I accept the invitation, and will be pleased to deliver the address at the time and place indicated.

With much respect,

I am, your ob't serv't,

JOHN DAVIDSON.

Hon. DE WITT C. MORRIS,

Assembly Chamber, Trenton, N. J.

WASHINGTON'S BIRTH DAY,


February 22d, 1866.

The meeting was called to order at 8 o'clock P. M., by Hon. De Witt Clinton Morris, of Hudson, who nominated for Chairman Hon. Charles C. Lathrop, of Burlington; Col. M. H. Beaumont was appointed Secretary.

Hon. C. C. Lathrop introduced the orator in a brief and happy address. He said that we meet to-night on one of the monumental days of the nation, a day that ushered into existence a man who was destined, under Providence, to be not only the leader but the Father of his Country. We met here a year since to commemorate this day, but under very different circumstances; then bloody war rolled its chariot wheels over our land and hostile forces were arrayed against each other; now blessed peace smiles upon us; we owe this change to the toil and blood of our fallen heroes, and we have met this evening to hear an eloquent gentleman address us on this subject.

I have the pleasure to introduce to you John Davidson, Esq., of Elizabeth.

At the close of the oration, after a few appropriate remarks by J. D. Hall, Esq., of Trenton, Mr. Morris, of Hudson, and Hon. Robert Moore, of Cumberland City, a vote was unanimously passed, thanking Mr. Davidson for his able and eloquent address and requesting the favor of a copy for publication.



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Copy of resolution offered in the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey, on February 28th, 1866, by the Hon. Robert Moore, of Cumberland county, which, on motion, was adopted :

Resolved, That John Davidson, Esq., be requested to furnish a copy of the address delivered by him in this House on the 22d inst. for publication, and that one thousand copies of the same be printed for use of the members of the Legislature.

Copy of letter from Joint Committee on Printing :

STATE OF NEW JERSEY,
ASSEMBLY CHAMBER, March 7th, 1866.

JOHN DAVIDSON, Esq.

DEAR SIR :—We have the honor to herewith enclose the resolution of the Assembly, requesting the favor of a copy of your eloquent address for publication, as delivered by you before the Legislature on the 22d of February.

Very respectfully, &c.,

W. W. WARE,
Chairman of Senate Committee on Printing.
GARRET VAN WAGONER,
Chairman of Assembly Committee on Printing.

Copy of answer of John Davidson, Esq., to Committee on Printing :

ELIZABETH, N. J., March 8th, 1866.

GENTLEMEN :—Your letter of the 7th March is received, requesting a copy of my address upon Our Sleeping Heroes for publication.

In reply thereto, I am happy to send herewith a copy of the address for the purposes indicated in your letter.

With great respect,

I am your ob't serv't,

JOHN DAVIDSON.

To Hon. W. W. WARE, Senate Committee, &c.

To Hon. G. VAN WAGONER, House Committee, &c.

ORATION.

It is a generally received maxim that a nation before being firmly established, has to undergo three great ordeals:

- 1st. The struggle for the formation of a country;
- 2d. Its ability to cope with foreign foes; and,
- 3d. Its inherent power to quell domestic strife within its borders.

A nation having passed through these three successive stages of existence, has a right to demand a foremost seat in the family of nations.

America, thanks be to the God of our fathers, has seen, met and triumphed in the triple trial.

The first, in our struggle for national existence, in the days of the Revolution.

The second, in combating and conquering the gigantic power of her whose morning drum-beat, following the sun and keeping company with the hours, encircles the earth with one continuous and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England.

The third, in having put the last enemy under our feet, and consigned to the grave of oblivion the so-called Confederate States of America.

And surely the last triumph is not the least.

We of the North were, and I fondly hope still are, a people whose predilections are pre-eminently peaceful; our country has grown to its present proud position by peaceful means, following the arts of commerce rather than the art of war.

We had no aspirations, as the ancient Romans, that America should rule the world; nor as the Danes of the middle ages, that no vessel should swim the ocean but an American cruiser; and, indeed, so completely were we wrapped up in following the quiet and remunerative walks of commerce, trade and agriculture, that a learned Englishman has said, "the only good the Northern States of America

has ever done for the world, was to place five millions of mechanics behind working benches, and work away from sunrise to sunset."

Therefore, no one need be surprised when we say we were unprepared for war. Yet, when the electric current smote us dumb with the startling intelligence on that April morning, the birthday of Henry Clay, that the flag of America had been dishonored, and that shot and shell were dealing death and destruction at a United States fort in Charleston harbor, we started as one man to defend all that which had made us the home of freedom, and the light-house of the world.

Then indeed, we changed from peace to war; then we renewed the oath of the infant Hannibal, and swore, by the God of Justice, eternal hatred to treason; then the farmer, like Putnam, left his harrow in the upturned furrow; the blacksmith, like Greene, his anvil; like Warren, the merchant left his desk; like Prescott, the student left the classic halls of learning. The arts of peace were laid upon the table and the conflict taken up—the sound of the hammer was hushed, and the roar of the musket took its place; the wheels of commerce stood still, and the wheels of artillery were put in motion; the pen was dropped upon the desk, and the sword taken up in the field. Youth, manhood and old age, alike caught the living, acting fire of heroic inspiration. Throughout the North the flame of liberty shot heavenward; the fires of freedom burned brightly on mountain top and in valley low; yea, the prairies caught the sound of war, and sent back the echo, "we are ready;" and thus enkindled with the glow of '76, the loyal North took up the contest, and southward marched to meet the foe.

"And there was mounting in hot haste; the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war."

Youth vied with manhood in the holy struggle, and age renewed its youth as at the fount of De Leon. The mother, wife and sister, worthy of the days of yore, held not back; in a day the "greasy mechanics and small-fisted farmers of the North" became the wall of freedom, and ushered forth from loyal homes, to return as conquerors.

The old Bay State leads the advance. Through Broadway the immortal Sixth Massachusetts file, amid the drizzling rain and the continuous cheer of the excited citizens. They reach Baltimore; warned of the danger they turn not back; in close ranks they march; in an instant they are attacked. Here, then, flowed the first blood in this

holy war. Glorious, to fall in such a cause; honored, to be the first martyr to head the long and honored list; and the name of Ladd will live, while his noble words of devotion to the cause are appreciated by the American heart, as, carried in on a shutter, with his dying words he exclaimed, "God bless the old flag." His ashes repose upon the hallowed bosom of Massachusetts, and the granite shaft at Lowell perpetuates his name.

The tramp of our army has shook the continent, and its renown extends as far as the bounds of civilization. The sword of the North, by the aid of Divine Providence, has hewn out victory for the nation. The army of Rebellion is no more, and the cause it sought to perpetuate is a thing of the past. Our soldiers have saved the nation's life, but oh, at what a price! Four hundred thousand men lie dead for you and me. How many widows? How many orphans? How many broken homes are there throughout the North to-day, as the price of the nation's redemption?

Christmas and Thanksgiving, with their hallowed memories and refreshing reunions, come and go; the family circle meet around the annual table, but, alas! there is a blank, a vacant chair; they wait the long, long weary day, but it remains unoccupied—*dead upon the battle-field!*—not here, to mingle with the loved on earth, and to enjoy, as we enjoy, the annual gathering and greeting of friends. Night after night the tongue of childhood calls his father's name, but no father's voice responds; he runs to greet his father's footstep, but no footstep breaks the long, the silent gloom. The hearthstone is broken and the fire of home is extinguished.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
 The swallow twittering from the straw built shed;
 The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
 No more shall rouse him from his lowly bed.
 For him no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
 Or busy housewife ply her evening care,
 Nor children run to lisp their sire's return,
 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

The might and magnitude of our army has surprised and astonished the world, and well it might, when we present them with the authentic record of 2,653,062 soldiers of the Republic having braved the dangers of the tented field. And in this mighty army of heroes, New Jersey claims the honor of having furnished seventy-nine thousand five hundred and eleven. The lamented Major Hatfield, of Elizabeth, leads the long and honored list.

We search the history of the world in vain for a parallel. The army of the Persians who invaded Greece numbered, we are told, about two and a half millions, but in this number were counted the wives, servants, concubines and eunuchs of the king, his officers and men, which made up more than two-thirds the number; and we may judge of the fighting material of this army, when we read that three hundred Spartans stopped their march for many days.

This army of the Union was formed almost in a day. It marched, it conquered, and in a day it melted away into the citizens of the Republic, and formed the bone, sinew, mind and muscle of the nation. It had no desire, like Alexander, the son of Philip, to linger on its victories, nor gaze, with astronomic eye, upon the heavenly bodies, and weep that it could not march to the stars and conquer the unknown worlds.

The soldiers and citizens of the Republic have found that it requires but the bugle's blast, and millions of freemen spring to their feet at their country's call. With such a soldiery, America fears not the world in arms. With such an army, with such a people as this, America gives no heed to the future.

The army of the Union will bear a comparison with the most famous armies of the world, in the comparison of the objects sought to be gained by the war. Rome, in her might, fought to make Rome the mistress of the world; the Crusaders contended for an idea; Frederick the Great fought his Prussian legions against half of Europe, to maintain his unjust title to Silesia; Bonaparte, to make himself the lawgiver of the continent.

The conquests of England in India and China; of Spain in Central and South America; of France in Algiers and Egypt, were to gain territory for their respective kingdoms and empires; *not* because they were right, but because they had the might—acting upon the false principle that might makes right. But our army fought because right makes might, and fighting in a just and holy cause we could not fail. God was with us, and He being for us, who are all those that are against us? Truly, as the stubble in the whirlwind. Our fathers, brothers and sons arose to support our standard as the grass upon the field. They rushed into the fight, and foremost fighting fell. The writing at Belshazzar's feast, "Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting," was repeated against the South, when she unsheathed her unhallowed sword to perpetuate an institution whose iniquitous barbarities towered as the Himalayas above the earth. To suppose

that the South, the North, or any people, could succeed in a war to fasten upon unborn generations the demoralizing institution of slavery, would be to suppose that God had ceased to rule among the nations of the earth, and had given the people over to their own destruction. Such was not the case, and when the North had been tried and re-tried in the fiery ordeal of war, and became, by her repeated discouragements, to learn the true cause of the contest, and the Emancipation Proclamation rang its glad accents of liberty through the land, heaven and earth re-echoed the "*well done.*" From that moment our star of victory assumed the ascendant.

Storms-winds and thunders, like flails, beat out the malaria of tropics. War fields are the threshing floor of nations, where chaff is parted from wheat, and the grain is made fit for humanity's garner.

The courage of our sleeping heroes like their patriotism, knew no bounds, the heat of summer, and the frosts of winter found them at their post of duty; the gentle breeze of spring, and the borean blasts of autumn witnessed their self-denial and heroic bearing, never faltering in the shock of battle, never lagging in the long, the tedious, the tiresome march. Whether amid the thunders of the conflict, or on the far outpost as a lonely picket; their duty they performed, ever ready, ever anxious to do battle for the right, ever willing to march through mud, through snow, through rain; shivering with the sleet of December, and burning with the summer's sun; these heroes endured it all, yea, gladly! if but the cause of their country could be advanced, even though it was through their sufferings, willing to meet in deadly combat, to die upon the field of strife unnamed, perhaps unnoticed and unknown, if the sacrifice of their lives could aid in winning freedom's fight.

We read of deaths upon the battle-field; and how glorious it is thus to die for country, amid the wild huzzas of the conquering charge, the smoke of battle, the din of war, and the flag of the free, waving in victory's folds above them; thus we read; but there is a vast unbridged chasm between reading and realization. Who can tell the fast crowding thoughts of mother, of home, of wife, and little ones dependent for daily bread upon the dying soldier, and who perhaps will never know—save by conjecture—their father's fate. Who can portray the dying soldier's thoughts as his northern home, with its blessed memories pass in panoramic review before the vision of his mind? 'Tis not the pain, the anguish of the death wound that brings the tear to the dying soldier's eye; but 'tis the loved memory of

those far, far away. 'Tis the breaking of the heart strings of affection, and the answer to the enquiry,

“Who will care for mother now?”

The roar of mighty cannon is unheard by the dying hero; while the little footstep, and innocent tender words of childhood are ringing in his ears as the sound of many waters.

With feeble hand he pressed an object to his lips, his last kiss on earth is imprinted upon it; his dying hands have grasped it firmly.

When the battle has ceased its roar, and faithful soldiers seek their fallen comrade, the sleeping hero is at rest, grasping in the cold icy hand of death, the picture of his child.

“Peace to the Patriot’s shade,
Let no rude blast disturb the willow,
That nods o’er his tomb,
Let infant tears bedew his sacred urn,
And fame’s loud trump proclaim
The hero’s name,
Far as the circuit of the spheres extend.”

Who shall undertake to tell the fortitude, the heroic bearing, and the agonies of those wounded in the shock of battle; and by the force of circumstances left for hours, perhaps days without aid or assistance, until sought out by some faithful soldier, or some agent of the Christian or Sanitary Commission? Who shall draw the picture of his sufferings, his meditations as amid his dead and dying comrades, he calls for the cooling water? and has only response, is the call of some other hero for assistance.

When we read in our daily paper “only five hundred wounded,” did you imagine the untold suffering, and pangs of mind and body covered by the brief words, “only five hundred wounded.” When aid has reached our disabled and dying heroes, many has been the request, that the attentions of the friendly hand, would first be bestowed upon some soldier more likely to survive, but one request he asks, as did the gallant christian soldier General Rice at the Wilderness; “turn me over boys and let me die with my face to the foe.”

There is a nobility about a wounded soldier, his manner, his bearing, his entire disregard of self, which few know, and none can appreciate unless he has mingled with our wounded heroes.

Who has visited our hospitals and not felt the deepest love and kindest of feeling as we gaze upon our heroes, maimed, wounded, shattered and nigh to death, and seen those upon whose countenance

the shadow of the dark valley has already fallen, and has not muttered the prayer, God bless our faithful soldiers?

And those now before me who have acted the part of the good Samaritan, and who have aided by kind words and good deeds, the wounded soldiers of the Republic, I am sure find an ample recompense in their hearts for all they have done.

It is just and proper that on this occasion, the birth-day of Washington, I should, in a few brief words, refer to the defender and preserver of that country, which Washington and his patriot band, by the sword of war, carved out of a seven years' contest.

Fifty-five years ago, February 12th, 1811, in Hardin county, Kentucky, was born in a log cabin, of parents "to fortune and to fame unknown," one who, ere his mortal race was run, was destined to fill both continents with his praise, and have a record in the world's great hero list, Abraham Lincoln. Denied, by the force of circumstances, the many advantages the more favored youth of our land possess, he passed from youth to manhood unnoticed, unknown.

Water will find its level; truth, honesty and integrity its rewards. Sought out by the people, honor and station were conferred upon him. At once the eye of freedom views this nature's nobleman, and he became the standard-bearer of a nation marching to a higher civilization.

And what shall I say of the honored, loved, lamented martyr, as he fell in the fulness of his manhood?

Through years of calumny, vituperation and misrepresentation, he pressed forward in his high calling, "*with charity for all men, and malice toward none.*" Nor did he lay his own life a sacrifice upon the altar of his country, until the seed of liberty had grown to a stately tree; until the full anticipation of his hopes had been realized in a blissful fruition, the capital of rebellion taken, and the army of the insurgents made prisoners. What more auspicious moment to die—could he have chosen the hour of his death—than that in which the long obscured sun of liberty was bursting in glorious splendor and virtue over the land he loved.

Like the Great Gustavus Adolphus, of Sweden, he fell in the hour of victory, and the glad acclaim of a ransomed people was hushed and drowned in the wailing and woe of a nation's sorrow in the loss of the nation's savior.

In the dark hours of war, he beheld the rainbow of promise and of victory, through the cloud and smoke of battle. Putting his trust in

a higher power than mortal arm, he adopted the sentiments and hymn of the dying soldier, Sir Henry Havelock, at Cawnpore :

“ Put thou thy trust in God,
In duty's path go on,
Fix on his word thy steadfast eye,
So shall thy work be done.”

Patient and long suffering, never hasty, always sure ; possessed of uncommon common sense ; disbursing thousands of millions, yet never unlawfully applying one penny ; urged by radicals and restrained by conservatives, he pursued the right ; neither fear nor favor could alter his honest heart ; while others drooped in doubt and despair, he was hopeful ; his hope, next to God, was not in his Cabinet nor Congress, but in the people of the North ; he knew the American heart, and could trust it—and I ask you to-night, was that trust misplaced ? Kind to a fault, treating the poor one-armed drummer boy and the haughty Senator alike ; listening with equal patience to the story of the widow, and to the claim of the office seeker ; receiving with the same cordiality the diplomatic corps of Europe, the Chamber of Commerce, and a deputation of colored men ; giving the same regard to the petition of the humblest, as he did to the highest citizen ; rejoicing with the joyous, and sorrowing with the sorrowful, he was pre-eminently a man of the people. Wonderful in his combination of rare talents and abilities ; he had the great faculty of saying just what he meant and no more. With all these virtues blended in one, and adorned with that *simplicity, which is the mark of a great man*, we behold Abraham Lincoln !

His name can never die, side by side with Washington's, it will deck the page of American's glory, and go down to posterity, to be honored and loved the more the man is known.

“ For thou art Freedom's now and Fame's—
One of the few immortal names,
That were not born to die.”

What need of monument, marble column or granite shaft to perpetuate his fame ? It is America's ; it can never, never die. Swiftly passing years and circling centuries will but add increased lustre to that name now bright as the first clear streak of day ; and as future generations see and realize the full glory of the meridian sun of universal liberty, and feel its benignant rays blessing the land with its untold, uncounted mercies ; they will with one accord crown Abraham Lincoln, the morning star of American liberty.

Peaceful be thy sleep, oh mighty martyr! Quiet be thy resting place in the bosom of thine own loved Illinois. The feet of quiet worshippers will wear a path to thy tomb; many will be the tears shed there at our loss, and many the acknowledgments that God raised thee up as a leader for his people.

Henceforth February 12th, and 22d, Mount Vernon and Oak Ridge, are sacred to liberty.

In speaking of those who are now sleeping the sleep of death in soldier's graves; I see a vast army of heroes who slumber in other fields than fields of strife; no less honorable than those who fell with musket in hand and face to the foe in the van of battle, are the starved soldiers of Andersonville.

Savage nations at times put their prisoners to death; but this barbarous practice has never been openly practiced by the civilized nations of the earth. The custom of the more learned of the nations of antiquity, of selling their prisoners into slavery, met the most positive reprobation and condemnation in the beginning of the feudal ages; and the system of ransom which was then adopted yielded early in the seventeenth century to the more liberal and humane policy of exchanging prisoners of war under *cartels*.

Until such exchange took place, the law of nations, the principles of humanity, and the enlightened idea of the civilized world required the belligerent parties to provide proper accommodations for the prisoners thrown by the varying fortunes of war into their hands, to supply them with healthy food, with suitable shelter and clothing; and in case of sickness, with proper medical attendance. Instead of this treatment, demanded by the laws of war and the custom of the civilized world, we have the horrid history of the loathsome prison pens of the south. Sixty thousand of our boys in blue starved to death.

Tongue cannot tell, nor heart conceive, the more than inhuman tortures of our prisoners, simply because they were soldiers of the Republic, and fighting freedom's battles, the "true hearted chivalry of the south" (?) heaped upon them torture upon torture, suffering upon suffering, until the frail casket was too weak for the burden, and was crushed beneath the weight. Not enough, that they were far from home and friends—not enough, that they were penned up like sheep in a fold—not enough, that they were robbed, and the very clothing stolen from their bodies—but to satisfy the "gallant southern gentlemen the chivalry of the land" (?) They must be starved to death by a

slow, gradual process of starvation, to which even the hangman's rope would be a mercy, worse than the crimes of Nena Sahib, or the tortures of Delhi—were a thousand fold than any horror Calcutta ever knew—worse than the ancient Persians ever invented, or the Hindoo or Burmese ever put in practice.

“Better the greedy grave should swallow all,
Better to meet the death conducting ball,
Better to sleep on Ocean's oozy bed,
At once destroyed, and numbered with the dead,
Than thus to perish in the face of day,
Where twice ten thousand deaths, one death delay.”

I challenge the historic page of the world to produce me a parallel. I challenge the barbarities of every clime and age, of every people and tongue, to show me an equal case of fiendish, hell-born malignity. Americans starving Americans! Prisoners, helpless and dying, starving and in the agonies of death, scrambling for a bone which a dog would refuse; fighting for a piece of mouldy bread, and shot at the dead line; living in holes and caves; exposed alike to the burning sun of summer, and shelterless amid the wild blasts of winter; wet by the drenching rain of autumn, and frozen by the sleet of February; crying daily for food; begging for the crumbs which fell from the table; knocked to the ground by the butt of the musket, and too helpless to rise, stamped to death; torn and mangled by the blood-hound; and with flesh worn to the bone by the chain gang, away from friends, and left to die, *even then* they knew no recantation, but, strong in the faith, they stood the test, amid the horrid wilderness of death. Yet *even then*, like Paul and Silas, they sang songs in the night of their captivity, in the Egypt of their sufferings. Not a murmur escaped their lips; borne up by an inward faith, they looked beyond the dark clouds, and Andersonville again resounds with the patriot song, sung by them in the front edge of battle:

“Rally 'round the flag, boys,
Rally once again,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom.”

The drummer boy of sixteen falls to the ground, calls his comrade to his side; the shades of death are rapidly passing over his young, and once bright, but now emaciated cheek; listen to his words: “I am dying; I have one request before I go; if you ever get North, oh, tell my poor mother that I stood and fell true to the old flag; tell

her, living or dying, never to desert it. Stand by the flag!" and death closed the scene.

And who among men shall attempt to portray the heart and burning agonies of the prisoner's mind, as, far from loved scenes and memories, far from wife and child, the image of a Northern home is daguerretyped upon the mind's eye; hear his words:

"In vain my harp the charms of home would sing,
Quick-gathering tears from answering eyelids spring,
And all the heart's deep sorrow, softly stirred,
O'erwhelms our manhood, at that one dear word
HOME! where the wife sits numbering day by day
The long, long hours, that steal her hopes away;
With low drawn sigh and voiceless prayer, to wait
The step that comes not to her lowly gate.
HOME! where the children, prattling war's acclaim,
Through mimic trumpets lisp their father's name;
But wondering, pause, to note with childish fears,
The eyes that watch them dim with sudden tears,
And, trembling, ask of lips that must be dumb,
'Why mother weeps? why father will not come?'"

Tempted in the very hour and article of death to foreswear their allegiance to their country and take the oath of adherence to the bastard confederacy, that by so doing their sufferings would cease and life be spared. *They spurned the insulting offer!* This was the true, mighty, and self-sustaining nobility of patriotism; the unconquerable spirit of liberty triumphing over death; calm, resolute, unconquered bravery; defying torture, starvation, loathsome disease, and the prospect of a neglected and forgotten grave. There was no prospect of glory to sustain them in their fearful trials; no excitement of battle, in which they might forget their danger and earn their death. Such men could not be conquered—taken, imprisoned they might be, but conquered, never! Wounded, neglected, starved, hurled without mercy into the nauseous tombs of living victims, to die unhonored and unknown. All this they saw and felt to be impending, but with prophetic eyes they also saw, beyond and above their individual sufferings, the image of their country's liberty rising in triumph above their graves.

Death might seal their career, but victory would crown their standard with eternal freedom. For this they had fought, and for it they were ready to die. They had weighed their country against the perils the rebellion involved, and were ready to meet its results, if not on the field of battle in deadly conflict, cheered by the shouts of

victory—*then and there*—and in any way, so that the principles of self-government were established and the arm of treason paralyzed. Sixty thousand heroes now sleep their last sleep beneath the Southern sod, the victims of Southern barbarity, in Andersonville, Florence, Millen, Belle Isle and Libby Prison. Oh, the agonies, the groans, the tears, which there lie buried.

These god-like martyrs have passed away—many of their names unknown—yet in freedom's golden shrine their honored dust remains. Green be the spot that marks the sleeping hero's final rest; let heaven's sweetest perfume breathe o'er the prisoner's tomb; and the loud anthem of a reunited land swell his praise in poetry and song; raise high the towering shaft that shall defy the tooth of time and deify the sleeping hero's name.

Four hundred thousand men,
The brave, the good, the true,
In tangled wood, and mountain glen,
On battle plain, in prison pen,
Lie dead for me and you !
Four hundred thousand of the brave
Have made our ransomed soil their grave,
For me and you !
In many a fevered swamp,
By many a black bayou,
In many a cold and frozen camp,
The weary sentinel ceased his tramp,
And died for me and you !
From western plain to ocean's tide,
Are stretched the graves of those who died
For me and you !
In treason's prison-hold
Their martyr spirits grew
To stature like the saints of old,
While 'mid agonies untold,
They starved for me and you !
The good, the patient, and the tried,
Four hundred thousand men have died
For me and you !

How many of our brothers and sons have left the christian home, to mingle in the dread conflict? How many hearts have ached as the last night at home draws its sable curtains around the world? Who can number the tears shed? Who shall count the prayers offered in his behalf? With what interest his every motion and word is watched and uttered.

How well I remember my loved brother William's return to my

father's house after three years spent in war. Oh, how sweet his presence; how melodious his voice; how manly his form; how true his heart; how brief his sojourn; how soon off again at his country's call; and how sweet his memory still. What sweet communings we had together in talk, in song, in prayer.

How his fond mother hovered o'er him, as with angel wings; how a pious father plead with God to protect him from the arrows of death.

And now his last evening with us came; he was to start on the morrow. When gathered around that family altar, under whose christian influence he was reared, his mother asked him if he had any particular hymn he would like sung? "Yes, mother" he answered, "sing the hymn, *Am I a soldier of the cross?*" and to-night I can almost hear his clear and silvery voice above his weeping brothers and sisters, as with the tone of inspiration he struck the verse—

"Thy saints in all this glorious war,
Shall conquer though they die."

Into the hands of a covenant-keeping God he was committed. The morrow came, and we bade the last good-bye. In the heart of the rebellion, fighting under the gallant Hooker, he freely laid his young life upon his country's altar.

And how many such partings as this have taken place within the last four years of war? Who would recall those heroes back to life? No; they rest from their labor and their works do follow them. I shed the bitter tear that a brother is now sleeping his last but peaceful sleep; yet I give thanks to God that I had one worthy to die in such a holy cause. Call him and our sleeping heroes back to earth? Nay, they are at rest; no sound shall awake them to glory again.

On fame's eternal camping ground
Their silent tents are spread.

Dead upon the field of battle; died for country and humanity—this is their record—what prouder record does mortal man desire? When my poor lisping, stammering tongue is silent in the grave; when my name shall have been forgotten and erased from the memory of mankind, the name of the humblest hero in this war will be written upon the escutcheon of his country, never to be forgotten. Oh, honored death to die for home and fatherland; to know that their blood has cemented together the foundation stones of the Republic; to know that they have saved the nation's life, and handed down to posterity the legacy bequeathed to us by the fathers.

If we stand by the great congregation of the dead at Gettysburgh, Antietam, Chattanooga or Andersonville, or in our own church-yard, we behold the mounds where sleep our heroes. The marble stone, placed by loving hands, and engraved thereon the record of his battles, will one day moulder and mingle with the dust of him to whose memory it owes its erection; the grave will sink even with the earth, and perhaps the ploughshare of some future yeoman, in unsuspecting ignorance, will cover both with other clay.

Ages will pass, and the graves of many of our martyred dead be beyond recognition; yet even then they live. These men cannot die. While America stands their record stands.

The debt we owe the sleeping heroes of the Republic, like the debt of divine love, can never be repaid. Should the monument to their memory be as high as the towering heights of Lookout Mountain, yet it would, even then, be as the very foundation stone of that which should commemorate their valor and their worth. Let the name, the fame, the deeds, the bravery of our soldiers—living and dead—swell on every tongue; let it be wafted on every breeze, and named in poetry and song.

When generation succeeding generation shall come and go, and the names of millions living and yet to be born will have passed away and be known no more, the heroes of the war, who have fallen asleep for the nation's life, will be gathering freshness and beauty, and laurel and ivy—green by the ages which have passed over them—will deck the hero's brow. They will stand as the giant oak of a hundred years, and like the towering heights of Gettysburgh and Resaca, stand prominent in the world's great history.

Monument and granite shaft will alike moulder in the dust, time will erase all impress from the crumbling stone, but their fame remains, for with American liberty it arose and with American liberty only can it perish. When Marathon and Salamis are forgotten, Antietam and Chicamauga will live; when Capua and Cannæ are known only in name, Spottsylvania and Atlanta will be remembered; Dresden and Austerlitz, Ramillies, Oudenard and Malplaquet will cease to be named, while Cold Harbor and Port Hudson, the Wilderness and Vicksburg, will become as household words. The valor at Waterloo and Solferino fades in the comparison with Petersburg, Wilmington, New Orleans and Mobile.

In the heroic ages the Greeks carefully gathered up the remains of those killed in battle; with great pomp they were brought to the

funeral pile, reduced to ashes, an oration pronounced, and the precious dust, encased in vessels of gold, was deposited in the temples of their gods. Egypt built her pyramids, mounds and obelisks to perpetuate the fame of her heroes; Rome raised the arch of triumph to her victorious Consuls; Germany repeats in song her heroes' names; France confers the legion of honor upon her Marshals; England Knights her great defenders, and treasures their remains in Westminster; but America worships in millions of loyal hearts to-day, and will for all time to come, her brave and true. She sheds the tear of sorrow at the soldier's grave, gathers in her national cemeteries the precious dust of her sleeping hero children. She confers a higher knighthood than France or England ever knew, because the title springs spontaneous, *not* from a Monarch's heart, but from the hearts of millions of her people.

The blood, the toil, the suffering of our four hundred thousand sleeping braves have perpetuated the gem of American liberty. They have preserved the rewards of our Pilgrim Fathers. 'Twas in vain the Puritans of New England left their father land, sojourned in Holland, embarked upon a frail vessel, upon an unknown sea, destined for an almost unknown land; tossed without by the heaving wave, and within by the troubled thoughts of the impenetrable future. The blasts of winter sung their solemn song, the sea gull piped his shrill note, and the dashing waves and nodding pines bade them welcome, as the Pilgrim band planted their weary feet on Plymouth Rock, and reared their temple to the living God, in the wilds of Massachusetts. 'Twas in vain they braved the dangers of the scalping knife and laid deep the foundation of our civil structure, if the heroes of our war had been less in courage and love of liberty than the Pilgrims of New England.

'Twas in vain the voice of Henry, of Warren and Otis, was raised in the good old days of yore; in vain we fought and vanquished her, whose proud boast had been,

Her flag has braved a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze.

In vain the blood of freemen flowed for seven years, and the soil of New Jersey drank in the patriot blood of colonial days. In vain Washington fought and Warren fell; in vain our Revolutionary fathers crimsoned Bunker Hill, and wet Lexington common with their life blood; in vain the snows of Montreal, and the warmer clime of the

Carolinas witnessed their valor, if the men of 1861 and '65, had not proved themselves the worthy sons of such an illustrious parentage.

Through the bravery and loyalty, the trials, the sufferings of our heroes living and dead, America to-day raises her head from the dust, perfect in its perfection; mighty in its strength; with locks unshorn she walks forth amongst the nations of the earth, conscious of her strength, made manifest by the fiery trial of war.

The flag of our nation flaps its pure folds in every breeze, not torn and tattered by war, but purified by the death of our heroes and cleansed in their blood, from the smallest taint of the dark pollution of slavery.

The honor of the emancipation of a nation's slaves, belongs to the nation's heroes. Of what avail would all the emancipation proclamations (and I speak of that proclamation and the illustrious and lamented hand which signed it with the greatest reverence); of what avail would all the emancipation proclamations, and all the constitutional amendments amount to, if our army had not given effect to the proclamation by its triumph, and by its victories preserved to the Union, the States wherein the amendment was intended to operate. Without the triumph of our arms, both would have been as the spray of the ocean, striking the rock of Gibraltar.

All honor to the Union army, its living and sleeping heroes, for having hushed the wail of parents and children upon the auction block, and for having laid in the grave beyond the hope of resurrection, the relic of a barbarous age.

America to-day stands ransomed, redeemed, regenerated, reunited, disenthralled. The wheels of the nation's industry are again revolving, peace smiles upon our land, and America goes forward in the great path which Providence has opened up for us towards a higher civilization, and more perfect nationality. Our broad land is again vocal with the sound of commerce.

Westward and Southward the tide of emigration takes its way. The mighty West, with its boundless prairie lands, will yet be peopled with freemen; her tall pine and giant oak will meet the woodman's axe; the rail car will sing its song of progress through the untrodden wilds, and the electric spark flash from ocean to ocean; the towering hill and mountain rock will be leveled, and the crooked made straight; the village church will toll its sweet Sabbath bell o'er the wigwam of the red man; the hum of industry and the prayer of religious worshippers will be heard where so late the war-whoop resounded; the tramp

of the buffalo will give place to the music of the anvil, for the West and South will bud and blossom as the rose! And Eden be raised in the waste wilderness.

God bless every man who wore the Federal blue, who carried a musket, or unsheathed a sword, to defend the nation's life!

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